

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NOUAKC 01524 041716Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 OPR-02 PER-01
SCS-03 SCA-01 A-01 MMO-01 SY-05 USSS-00 OMB-01
MCT-01 ACDA-07 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /100 W
-----049681 041724Z /42

O R 041630Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7736
INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION USUN
CINCEUR
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

CONFIDENTIAL NOUAKCHOTT 1524

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, SS, MR
SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: MORNING AFTER JULY 3 ATTACK ON NOUAKCHOTT

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 1523 (NOTAL)

1. WHILE GENERAL PATTERN OF JULY 3 NOUAKCHOTT ATTACK IS REASONABLY
CLEAR, DETAILS OF ENGAGEMENT REMAIN UNCONFIRMED. FOLLOWING
OBTAINED FROM OBSERVATION AND VARIETY OF DIPLOMATIC AND OTHER SOURCES:

(A) ATTACKING POLISARIO FORCE CONSISTING OF 38 TO 50 LANDROVERS WAS
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INTERCEPTED SOM 20 KILOMETERS NORTH OF NOUAKCHOTT BETWEEN 1830 AND
1900Z JULY 3. FIFTEEN VEHICLES ELUDED INTERCEPTORS, AND PENETRATED
TO WITHIN 5 KILOMETERS OF CITY. TWO LANDROVERS WERE INTERCEPTED
BY GENDARMERIE TWO KILOMETERS NORTH OF AIRPORT. ACCORDING HNE
REPORT, POLISARIO SIMULTANEOUSLY ATTACKED COPPOLANI, 30 KM NORTHWEST OF

CAPITAL.

(B) MAURITANIAN MILITARY REPORTEDLY ENGAGED DEPARTING POLLUARIO
ATTACK
FORCE AT BEILA (TWELVE KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF CITY); SOUND OF
HEAVY WEAPONS AND POSSIBLY ARTILLERY WAS CLEARLY AUDIBLE IN TOWN
FROM 2310 TO 2320Z.

(C) AS OF MID-MORNING JULY 4 ATTACKING FORCE WAS REPORTEDLY 150
KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF NOUAKCHOTT. MAURITANIAN AIR FORCE SPOTTER
PLANES REPORTEDLY HAD RETREATING FORCE UNDER SURVEILLANCE,
AND ARMY GROUND UNITS WERE ATTACKING NORTH-MOVING POLISARIO
COLUMN. AIR FORCE DEFENDERS AND SKYVANS PARKED ON NOUAKCHOTT TARMAC
LATE AFTERNOON JULY 3 HAD DISSAPPEARED BY MORNING OF FOURTH.

ED) NORTH (REAR) WALLOFRESIDENTIAL COMPOUND TOOK DIRECT HIT. GERMAN
EMBOFF SAW 6 TO 8 ROUNDS DROP INTO 700 METER WIDE EMPTY DUNE
AREA BETWEEN GERMAN/SPANISH/US EMBASSIES AND SOVIET COMPOUND TO
NORTH. ALTRTO RUMORS PERSIST THAT ONE SHELL LANDED INSIDE
SOVIET COMPOUND, SOVIET EMBOFFS ASSERT ROUNDS LANDED BOTH NORTH AND
SOUTH OF BUT NOT IN SOVIET EMBASSY.
MISOFFS SAW PERHAPS DOZEN ROUNDS HIT FROM 1 TO 3 KILOMETERS NORTH
OF PRESIDENCY REAR WALL BEFORE DARKNESS FELL.

(E) AT LEAST TWO ROUNDS OVERSHOT PRESIDENCY AREA AND LANDED SOUTH OF
MAIN STREET (ROUGHLY ONE BLOCK BEHIND MARHABA HOTEL). CIVILIAN AUTO
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BADLY DAMAGED BY BLASHSND METAL FROM ONE; MORNING AFTER BYSTANDERS
REPORT DRIVER WAS KILLED. SECOND ROUND IMPACTED 100 METERS AWAY
RIDDLING
PARKED CARKND RESIDENCE WALL WITH SHARPNEL. RAPIDLY CIRCULATING
RUMORS ASSERTING NIGHTWATCHMAN AT MEDICAL CLINIC ACROSS FROM
MARHABA WAS KILLED AND TEENAGER HIT BY SPENT BULLET.

(F) MEMBER PRESIDENTIAL TOLD EMBOFFS THAT ONE TROOPER INSIDE
PREISDENTIAL COMPOUND WAS WOUNDED IN LEG BY SHRAPNEL.

2. ALTHOUGH SECURITY AT NOUAKCHOTT AIRPORT HAS BEEN NOTICEABLY TIGHTNED
AND MORE SOLDIERS THAN USUAL ARE VISIBLE AROUND CITY MORNING
AND EARLY AFTERNOON JULY 4 MOST, OF NOUAKCHOTT APPEARS TO BE
ON BUSINESS-AS-USUAL FOOTING. INITIAL NEAR PANIC AROUSED IN
NEIGHBORHOOD BY DECISION OF AUTHORITIES DURING EVENING ATTACK
TO MOVE OUT RESIDENTS OF HOUSING PROJECT ON NORTHERN EDGE
OF CITY BETWEEN FRENCH AND SOVIET EMBASSIES APPEARS TO HAVE
WORN OFF. RUMORED FLIGHT OF LEBANESE COMMUNITY DURING EVENING
BARRAGE UNCONFIRMED SO FAR. ONLY INDICATION OF UNEASINESS MORNING
FOURTH IS LONG LINES OF PRIVATE VEHICLES AT GASOLINE STATIONS AROUND
CITY WAITING TO FILL UP.

3. US COMMUNITY IN NOUAKCHOTT CURRENTLY CONSISTS OF 22 USG EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENTS, 7 TDY USAID CONTRACTORS, AND APPROXIMATELY 20 PRIVATE CITIZENS. ALL AFE, UNHARMED, AND CALM.

HANDYSIDE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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